

Risk Factors for Falls

Research has identified many risk factors that contribute to falling—some of these are modifiable.

Most falls are caused by the interaction of multiple risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater his/her chances of falling. Healthcare providers can lower a person's risk by reducing or minimizing that individual's risk factors.

What healthcare providers can do

To prevent falls, providers should talk to their patients about their health goals. Then, determine which modifiable fall risk factors can be addressed to help them meet their goals.

Effective clinical and community interventions exist for the following fall risk factors:

- ▶ Vestibular disorder/poor balance
- ▶ Vitamin D insufficiency
- ▶ Medications linked to falls
- ▶ Postural hypotension
- ▶ Vision impairment
- ▶ Foot or ankle disorder
- ▶ Home hazards

CDC's STEADI tools and resources can help you screen, assess, and intervene to reduce your patient's fall risk. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/steady.

Risks factors are categorized as intrinsic or extrinsic:

INTRINSIC | Factors

- Advanced age
- Previous falls
- Muscle weakness
- Gait & balance problems
- Poor vision
- Postural hypotension
- Chronic conditions including arthritis, stroke, incontinence, diabetes, Parkinson's, dementia
- Fear of falling

EXTRINSIC | Factors

- Lack of stair handrails
- Poor stair design
- Lack of bathroom grab bars
- Dim lighting or glare
- Obstacles & tripping hazards
- Slippery or uneven surfaces
- Psychoactive medications
- Improper use of assistive device